



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

**OFFICE OF THE
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

JUN 06 2017

Secretary Butch Tongate
New Mexico Environment Department
Harold Runnels Building
1190 St. Francis Dr. Suite N4050
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Secretary Ken McQueen
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources
Department
1220 South St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Secretaries Tongate and McQueen,

Thank you for your May 26 letter regarding disposal options the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering for the Quivira Mine site.

In the attached 2014 letter, your predecessors noted the inclusion of many mine sites important to the State of New Mexico in the 2014 Tronox settlement. Since then, in a spirit of cooperation, staff from the State of New Mexico, Navajo Nation and EPA have convened quarterly Tronox meetings. With my colleagues in EPA Region 6, we recommend convening regular executive discussions with the State of New Mexico and the Navajo Nation regarding the larger universe of mines to be addressed.

EPA relies upon the engagement of both the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico to address the approximately 50 abandoned mines sites in the Tronox settlement. The next Tronox stakeholder meeting will occur June 7; the agenda includes a discussion of developing management principles to prioritize these sites. These shared principles will help facilitate the significant coordination and collaboration needed among all stakeholders to ensure available funds address the most significant threats. EPA's work to date shows that the aggregate costs of remediation could far exceed available funds, even for the Tronox subset of mines.

The June 7 discussions can help inform the agenda for an executive-level meeting of EPA, Navajo Nation and New Mexico. We welcome your participation in a sustained discussion and review of strategic priorities and approaches to remediation. I have asked Enrique Manzanilla, EPA Region 9's Superfund Division Director, and Carl Edlund, EPA Region 6's Superfund Division Director, to work with your offices to find a time and place for our meeting.

With my colleague Sam Coleman, I hope we can convene a productive dialogue to further our shared goals of protecting Navajo and New Mexico communities, and look forward to working with you. Please feel free to call me at (415) 974-3572, or email me at Strauss.Alexis@epa.gov. Enrique Manzanilla can be reached at (415) 972-3843 or at Manzanilla.Enrique@epa.gov.

Sincerely yours,



6 June 2017

Alexis Strauss
Acting Regional Administrator

Copy: Russell Begaye, President, Navajo Nation
Sam Coleman, Acting Regional Administrator, EPA Region 6
Arbin Mitchell, Chief of Staff, Office of the Navajo Nation President & Vice President
Dr. Don Benn, Director, Navajo Environmental Protection Agency
Bruce Yurdin, Director, Ground Water Quality Bureau, New Mexico Environment Dept.
Fernando Martinez, Director, Mining and Minerals Division, New Mexico Energy,
Minerals, and Natural Resources Dept.